



Catholic Faith, Life & Creed

A Complete Catechesis for Christian Living

Doctrinal Catechesis Session Mary Birmingham

MIRACLES



Altar piece in Raahe Church: In a Storm with Jesus, 1926, public domain.
Eero Järnefelt (1863-1937)



Begin with the Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening prayer

Option 1: Use Opening Prayer from the Sunday Liturgy.

Option 2: Use the prayer provided below

Prayer of Pope Clement XI

Lord, I believe in you: increase my faith.

I trust in you: strengthen my trust.

I love you: let me love you more and more.

I am sorry for my sins: deepen my sorrow.

I worship you as my first beginning.

I long for you as my last end.

I praise you as my constant helper.

And I call you as my loving protector.

I want to do what you ask of me:

In the way you ask, for as long as you ask, because you ask it.

Let me love you Lord as my God.

And see myself as I really am: a pilgrim in this world.

A Christian called to respect and love all those lives I touch.

Note to the Catechist

There may be more material than you can use in a one-hour session. Select and arrange accordingly. Use questions and material that is best suited for your particular group.



Read the connecting statement

to draw the line between this week's liturgy and this chosen doctrinal theme.

This connecting statement is found in the **Breaking Open the Word** worksheet for this week.

Catholic Faith, Life & Creed Version 2.0

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Version 2.0 reflects all recent revisions in
the Roman Missal.

NIHIL OBSTAT
Rev. Steven Olds
Censor Liborum

IMPRIMATUR
† Most Rev. John Noonan
Bishop of Orlando

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Sharing Human Experience

Catechist leads participants in a small group sharing exercise. Break into small groups (three or four). Remind participants to make time for all in the group to respond. Ask each person to present his or her own definition of “miracle.”

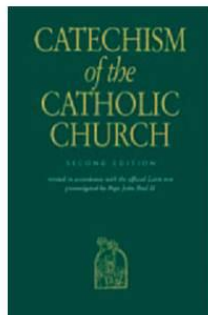
- ▶ When you hear the word *miracle*, what does it mean to you?

Catechist continues:

- ▶ Definition: Webster Dictionary tells us that the word *miracle* comes from Middle English, from Anglo French, and from late Latin—the word, *miraculum*, which means a wonder, a marvel, something to wonder at.
- ▶ Officially, a miracle is described as an extraordinary event in which the divine is manifested in human affairs. It is also an extremely outstanding or unusual event or accomplishment.

Catechist invites participants to respond to the following question.

- ▶ Considering the origin of the word, can you describe an event in your life that could be described as a wonder or a marvel?



Sharing Catholic Doctrine

Drawn from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Catechist continues:

- ▶ Miracles are the hallmark of Jesus ministry. Our Church has a defined theology of *miracles*.
- ▶ It is important for Catholics to understand what we believe about miracles and what we do not believe about miracles.
- ▶ A common interpretation of *miracle* is an extraordinary event in which the laws of nature are temporarily suspended. All contemporary religions share this interpretation.

- ▶ “Miracle” may also refer to a beneficial yet extremely unlikely event that extends way beyond normal levels of statistical probability such as surviving a natural disaster. It might also simply refer to a “wonderful” event regardless of whether or not it is statistically likely or not, such as birth. Other miracles might be: survival of a fatal illness, escaping a life threatening situation, or “beating the odds.”
- ▶ Modern theologians and biblical scholars present miracles as the way in which God communicates meaning to human beings and through which he invites a intimate relationship with himself, in which God invites faith and conversion.
- ▶ Contemporary theology tells us that the “facts” of the miracle are less important than the “meaning” of the miracle.

Catechist invites participants to respond to the following question.

- ▶ Consider a marvelous action of God in your life—perhaps the action you related earlier.
- ▶ What was more important in that action—the act itself or what the action meant to you or what God taught you in the midst of the action?

Catechist continues:

- ▶ While it is nonetheless true that some events that believers call miracles can be explained away as natural causes, it is equally true that some events defy the laws of nature and can only be explained as God’s intervention in the affairs of human beings.
- ▶ How arrogant of the human race to think that we know everything there is to know about the way nature works.
- ▶ God can do anything God wants to do. God is the author of all creation.
- ▶ The important question then becomes: What is God communicating to us in the midst of the marvelous actions we call miracles?

Wider group discussion. See appendix #1 for an example.

- ▶ Can you name a modern-day miracle, an event that can only be described as an act of God?

(It might be interesting to see if participants cite the safe landing of the airplane on the Hudson. Strictly speaking, even though unlikely, it does not defy the laws of nature. But it is statistically unlikely. However, one could say it was miraculous in that God was with that pilot in his expert maneuvering, God was speaking to the world in and through it and that no doubt God was present in it. Just because something does not defy the laws of nature [rare though it might be] does not mean it is not miraculous.)

Refer to appendix #2 for a brief discussion about the miracles associated with Mary, the Mother of God.

Old Testament Context of Miracles

- ▶ The ancient world did not encounter its world in the same way the modern world encounters it. There is a cultural chasm that divides it.
- ▶ For many in the modern world, miracles (understood as events in which the only explanation is intervention by God since the event superseded the laws of nature) are subject to rational explanation.
- ▶ For others, miracles are a sign and reason for their faith in the first place.
- ▶ Ancient cultures understood cause and effect events and realities to be the result of God's intervention in human history. If it rained, it was a sign of God's care for the earth, if there was a destructive flood it was God's punishment for the sins of the people. God was (or for some, gods were) the author of all natural phenomenon. The ancient world had no concept of *laws of nature*.

Old Testament

- ▶ Recorded miracles in the Old Testament were intended to tell of God's relationship with human beings. The Old Testament was less concerned with telling how God transcended the laws of nature—that was to be expected!
- ▶ Some miracle stories were simply literary devices to teach a theology of God. For example, Jonah swallowed in the belly of the whale was a story used to teach believers a truth about God's relationship with human beings.
- ▶ However, that does not mean that God did not intervene in powerful ways or that the people did not recognize God's action in miraculous ways. They were simply more tuned in to God's constant action in their world than we are.
- ▶ The primary miracle in the Old Testament was the Exodus, not because God manipulated the water, but because God used that action to free the people from slavery. God liberated them from their task masters. God chose the Israelites over the more powerful Egyptians. He chose slaves over their rulers. For ancient Israelites, that was the real miracle!
- ▶ The Israelites did not have a word for miracle; three words were used.
 - Sign: something that calls attention to itself (plagues that helped convince Pharaoh to free the slaves)
 - Portent: a sign of future events (plagues were called portents)
 - Wonder: the unexpected, going beyond what is expected (God's wondrous deeds in creation, the crossing of Jordan)
- ▶ None of the three words refer to miraculous events per se. They do, however, refer to ordinary events of life.
- ▶ The real miracle for Israel is the fact that God was with them. Emmanuel. God accomplished marvelous deeds for his people.
- ▶ Old Testament stories of the miraculous primarily affirm God who saved the people of Israel. For them, that was the only miracle that counted.

Catechist invites participants to respond to the following questions in groups of four.

- ▶ Imagine the world of the ancient Jewish people.
- ▶ Everything that happened in their world was understood as either a favor from God for righteous living or a punishment of God for sinful behavior.
- ▶ With that as a context, consider your life. If indeed God worked in human affairs the ways the ancient people believed, can you name an event in your life that might have been considered a punishment for sin and an event that might have been considered a reward for righteous living?
- ▶ Do you think this is the way in which God really works in human history?
- ▶ What does that say to you about God?

Catechists: Allow the participants to respond to the above questions, but make sure you qualify their answers if necessary. For example, it is important to note that God does not cause calamities because we are sinners. During the hurricanes of a few years ago, we were evacuating for a second hurricane just as the insurance adjuster was examining our home for hurricane that had hit us the week prior. He told us God was punishing Florida because of Disney's gay-pride day. The implication? This man was insisting that God was punishing Florida for the sin of homosexuality. While this is absurd, such a notion was common in the Old Testament. Cataclysmic events were understood as punishment for sin. Jesus turned that notion on end when he was asked about the tower that fell on the poor people in a nearby town. He insisted that it was not due to punishment for their sin or the sin of their parents. Calamities simply happen. God does, however, use those events to speak to us, to teach us, to get our attention, and to invite deep conversion. But God does not set out to destroy us because we are sinners!

New Testament

- ▶ Scholars are somewhat disappointed in the way in which the word *miracle* has been translated from the Hebrew to exclusively refer to events that transcend the laws of nature and the fact that gospel miracles came to be understood as *proofs*.
- ▶ Pope John Paul II moved beyond the *miracles as proofs* thinking when he named Kateri Tekawitha and Maximillian Kolbe to the status of *blessed* and *saint* without the necessary proof of miracles to do so. They were saintly because they were holy disciples of Christ, not because miracles were caused by their intercession.
- ▶ It is often difficult for the Western, post-Enlightenment cultures to accept the concept of miracles or even to respect how a first century peasant might have understood the concept.
- ▶ Such a first century citizen understood God as having complete mastery over nature. God was in complete charge of nature; he exercised complete control over it.
- ▶ Everything was possible because God was in control of all things. Thus, the ancient world understood miracles as signs of God's mercy, omnipotence, and power.
- ▶ Miracles are also signs of God's care for his people. They were always accompanied by the amazement of people at the sign yet at the same time included awareness that this was normative behavior for God who constantly intervened in human history.
- ▶ Contemporaries of Jesus believed that it was time for God to act powerfully in their history, to control both nature and their lives, in order to show the world who was in charge.

- ▶ Some people who experienced Jesus' signs and wonders were as skeptical then about his miracles as people are today.
- ▶ The word for *miracle* in the New Testament is *mighty deeds*.
- ▶ Such mighty deeds include control over spirits, healing, control of nature such as the calming of the winds and multiplying food for people.
- ▶ Jewish leaders were not impressed by Jesus' great deeds. Their concern was, "by whose authority was Jesus working such deeds?"
- ▶ Was he working in God's name or was he a fraud? There was a firm conviction that some people did have control over nature with the understood intervention of a higher, non-human source. Was the miracle due to the intervention of God or Beelzebub?
- ▶ The Jewish authorities wanted to be in control of the people. They feared that Jesus would gain that control if they believed in his miracles.
- ▶ Bottom line in the New Testament, however, is that miracles happened and they happened often.
- ▶ Two things were required in the New Testament for a miracle to take place:
 - Faith was required
 - A response was expected.
- ▶ In the client-patron culture in which Jesus lived, he was the patron and the clients were recipients of the miracle. In such a system, the patron is due a response to the gift offered. When Jesus complained that the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida did not repent in response to his miracle, they dishonored God.
- ▶ Response should not be "thank you" as that terminates the contract. Services were no longer needed. The Samaritan returned to give thanks for being healed of leprosy (they figured that they would probably not encounter Jesus again), but the others went on to the Temple to give praise and thanks to God. They left their options open. They might need to return to Jesus for further healing.

Catechist pauses and invites participants to summarize in the wider group.

- ▶ How did ancient communities understand the term miracle?
- ▶ Contrast that with the way present cultures understand the term.

What does our catechism tell us about miracles?

- ▶ (CCC, 155): Through faith our will and our intellect cooperate with God's grace. When we believe in miracles, we give assent through our intellect and our will, thus cooperating with divine grace. We believe in the miracles of God by the grace of God, but it does require a response of faith on our part.
- ▶ God has given us human reason by which to come to faith in him.
- ▶ The miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, etc., are the most certain signs of God's revealing presence to the world (CCC, 156).
- ▶ Miracles are "motives of credibility." In other words, they give credibility to the faith we place in God and the signs that God works. In other words, they show us that our belief in them is not just some blind whim (CCC, 156).

- ▶ If we are more concerned with the wow factor of miracles without paying attention to what God is revealing to us, what God is teaching us, or how God wants us to grow in faith and intimacy with him, then we are missing the entire purpose of miracles in the first place. Jesus was very frustrated with the people who demanded signs over and over again. “Blessed are those who believe without seeing,” he insisted!

Catechist shares a story of a miracle in which God used the miracle to teach or reveal his will. A parishioner might be invited to share a similar story. See appendix #4 for an example.

- ▶ The Catechism tells us Jesus’ miracles are a reminder—a sign—that he is fully divine. Jesus is God (CCC 515).
- ▶ Jesus’ miracles (albeit his entire life and mission) are intended to reveal God the Father to human beings (CCC, 515).
- ▶ Jesus’ words are accompanied by signs and wonders. Such signs and wonders reveal his kingdom to us and point us to the truth that he is the long awaited Messiah (CCC, 547).
- ▶ Jesus’ miracles invite us to believe in him. Miracles help strengthen faith in the One who not only does the work of the Father but who reveals him to us. Miracles witness to the undeniable truth that Jesus is God.
- ▶ Miracles are not for the purpose of satisfying curiosity or desire for magic (CCC, 548).
- ▶ Despite his obvious miracles, some people nevertheless reject him and choose not to believe. Some people accused him of operating under the authority of demons (CCC, 549).
- ▶ Why, then, if Jesus could perform miracles, is there suffering in the world? Could not God simply say the word and all suffering would end? The Catechism tells us that when Jesus freed some people from the earthly evils of hunger, injustice, illness, and death, he was performing messianic signs (miracles). However, he did not come to abolish all evils here, but rather he came to free people from the greatest slavery of all: sin.
- ▶ Why did Jesus manifest the Kingdom by means of signs and miracles? Jesus accompanied his words with signs and miracles to bear witness to the fact that the Kingdom, the reign of God, is present in him, the Messiah (#108: Compendium of the Catholic Catechism).
- ▶ Jesus promised that his disciples would do even greater works than he. That is why we can expect the signs and wonders to continue in our time.
- ▶ Not everyone responded to Jesus’ miracles in a positive manner. Some were skeptical, spiritually immature, and legalistic. Such attitudes prevented them from seeing the amazing work of God through Jesus’ miracles.

Implications

- ▶ We are challenged to move beyond our post-Enlightenment skepticism in relation to miracles and see the intervention of God in all human affairs.
- ▶ If we believe in God's omnipotence then how difficult is it to believe in his power over all created order?
- ▶ If we do not believe in miracles on some level, does that not reflect on our belief in God?
- ▶ Can we really say we believe in God if we deny that God can accomplish miracles out of love, care, and concern for the people he created?

Catechist invites participants to respond to the following questions in small groups.

- ▶ Do you believe in miracles?
- ▶ Do you believe in miracles that defy the laws of nature?
- ▶ Do you believe in the profound action of God that causes great wonder and amazement? Explain.
- ▶ Do you really believe that Jesus was raised from the dead?
- ▶ Do you really believe that God parted the waters so the Israelites could pass through?
- ▶ Do you really believe that Jesus healed the man born blind?
- ▶ If you do, how does this belief influence the way you live your Christian life?
- ▶ If you struggle with believing such things, what does that say to you about your faith in God?

Catechist: It is important to remind people that doubt is very often a constant companion in the Christian life. Mother Theresa struggled with doubt her entire life. Doubt is not a bad thing unless we succumb to it and give up. Prayer is the only antidote for doubt. "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief!"

Different Types of Miracles that Jesus performed

Nature Miracles

- ▶ The multiplication of the loaves is the only miracle story recorded by all four evangelists.
- ▶ Changing of water into wine
- ▶ First miraculous catch of fish
- ▶ Calming of the storm
- ▶ Multiplication of loaves
- ▶ Walking on water
- ▶ Second multiplication of loaves
- ▶ Coin in the fish's mouth
- ▶ Second miraculous catch of fish

Healings of Jesus

- ▶ Healing of the royal official's son
- ▶ Cleansing of the leper
- ▶ Cure of the mother-in-law of Peter
- ▶ Healing of paralytic

- ▶ Healing a sick man at Beth-zatha
- ▶ Restoring man with withered hand
- ▶ Healing the centurion's servant
- ▶ Healing of blind and mute person
- ▶ Healing of woman with hemorrhage
- ▶ Opening eyes of two blind men
- ▶ Cure of mute man
- ▶ Healing of deaf and mute man
- ▶ Opening the eyes of a blind person at Bethsaida
- ▶ Opening eyes of man born blind; restoring sick woman
- ▶ Healing the man with dropsy
- ▶ Cleansing lepers
- ▶ Opening eyes of blind man
- ▶ Healing Malchus' ear

Seven Deliverances of Jesus

- ▶ Demoniac at Capernaum
- ▶ Blind and mute demoniac
- ▶ Gadarene demoniacs
- ▶ Mute demoniac
- ▶ Daughter of Syro-Phonecian woman
- ▶ Child with demon
- ▶ Infirm woman

Victory over hostile antagonists

- ▶ Cleansing of Temple
- ▶ Escape from hostile crowd at Nazareth

Resuscitations

- ▶ Not resurrection like Jesus experienced; these people were restored to life but eventually were subject to natural death.
- ▶ The daughter of Jairus, Son of the widow of Nain, Lazarus

John's Gospel

- ▶ John's Gospel referred to extraordinary supernatural deeds of Jesus as signs.
- ▶ The first 11 chapters of the Gospel according to John are often referred to as the Book of Signs. The last ten are called the Book of Glory.
- ▶ John himself used the word sign instead of miracle. "A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick" (John 6:2).
- ▶ John recorded seven signs.
- ▶ For John, there is only one miracle: the death and resurrection of Jesus, the paschal mystery.
- ▶ John presents a theology of miracles in his last chapter. He insisted that there were other signs but that these were recorded in order to bring people to faith in Christ.
 - ✓ Changing water into wine at Cana

- ✓ Cure of royal official's son
- ✓ Cure on a Sabbath feast
- ✓ Multiplication of loaves at Passover
- ✓ Walking on the sea
- ✓ Cure of man blind from birth
- ✓ Raising of Lazarus



Community Connections

Catechist invites participants to relate what was shared today to some experience in their lives. Catechist shares an experience that relates how Catholic theology of miracles has a direct bearing on what is taking place in his or her life right now. Catechist then invites others to do the same in groups of two (dyads).

Catechist informs the group of any parish activity taking place and makes arrangements for group participation. For example: God's incredible, miraculous action in our lives is an invitation and a challenge to show God's love to the world. Our parish is sponsoring a free trade sale this weekend intended to sell the wares of third country communities so they can secure a fair price for their labors. They need volunteers to help with the sale. Let us meet together after the Mass on Saturday evening.



Mystagogy & your decision for change

Catechist invites participants to respond in faith to the following challenge by writing their response in their journal.

- ▶ In what way does this teaching on miracles challenge you at this time in your life?
- ▶ In what way does today's session on miracles invite you to more fully live the paschal mystery of Christ, to join your joys and sorrows to the death and resurrection of Christ?
- ▶ In response to God's great gift of presence to us through his signs and wonders what are you willing to change in your life, a belief, a behavior, an action, or an addiction?

Journal

Question for reflection throughout the week: Using the definition of miracle as wonder and amazement at God's action in your life, begin making a list of all the miracles in your life that come to mind. Write God a thank-you letter.



Closing Prayer

Option 1: If this is a catechumenal session, end the session with Intercessions, Doxology (“Glory be to the Father...”), a minor rite—a blessing or minor exorcism, RCIA # 90-97.

Option 2: If this is not a catechumenal setting, end with one or both of the Opening Prayers for the Sunday after Pentecost in the Sacramentary: Trinity Sunday. Include Intercessions and the Lord's Prayer.

Appendix

1. One story of a modern day-miracle: In Grand Island, Nebraska, an unexpected tornado was headed directly toward the town hospital. Had it hit the hospital, many people would have been killed. Fifteen minutes before the tornado hit, a ladder accidentally fell against the hospital alarm, and all of the patients were taken to the basement. No one was injured.

2. The appearances of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of course, would be considered miracles. However, it is not required of Catholics that they believe in them. Some have been pronounced as authentic and others have not. For example, the apparition of Mary to the young children at Fatima has been designated authentic. There are corroborating miracles that attest to this event. It is a miracle claimed valid by the Church, the Miracle of the Sun which occurred near Fatima, Portugal on October 13, 1917. Anywhere between 70,000 and 100,000 people, who were gathered at a cove near Fatima, witnessed the sun dim, change colors, spin, dance about in the sky, and appear to plummet to earth, radiating great heat in the process. After the ten-minute event, the ground and the people's clothing, which had been drenched by a previous rainstorm, were both dry. There are numerous first-hand reports of the details from both religious and secular sources.

Mary's appearances at Medjugore, Yugoslavia, on the other hand, have not been designated as authentic. Many people have been touched by this apparition, but it has not been given sanction and approval by the Church. That is why we need the authority of the Church over such things. Prudence, diligence, scholarship, discernment is needed to determine if something is of God or not. The Church uses discernible criteria to determine if an action or an event constitutes a miracle. For example, when the Church elevates a holy person to the status of sainthood (the process is called canonization), there must be serious investigation and the corroborated evidence of several authentic, bona-fide miracles.

3. My son-in-law was in Afghanistan. He was there for 15 months. We were very anxious for him to come home. Yet, for security reasons, he could not tell us when he would return. Before he was sent to Afghanistan, I gave him a very special sacramental—a family heirloom, which was a relic of St. Maria Goretti. A relic is an object that contains a remembrance and commemoration of a certain saint that perhaps included material that was touched to the saint's body or perhaps a bone chip from the saint.

Such a relic is a reminder of the great deeds and intercession of the saint whose relic it is. Maria Goretti was a young woman who resisted a violent rape and gave her life in the process. She stood up for her faith in the face of violence.

I sent this relic with my son-in-law and told him we would all be praying for Maria Goretti's intercession so that he would remain safe.

We knew the time was fast approaching for his return home. My daughter called and told us the amazing news. We were in awe over God's intervention. This was for us a true miracle, an arrangement of events by God to show us how much he loved us, to teach us that we must abandon our lives to God's care and a reminder that we are to trust God in all things, even when it all seems lost.

My son-in-law could not tell us the day or the hour of his return, but he did give us a clue. He told us that he would be returning home nine days from our son Joe's birthday. We quickly checked the Catholic calendar on the wall and much to our amazement nine days from my son's birthday was the feast of St. Maria Goretti. No words are adequate to express our amazement!

God's perfect timing, while not outside the laws of nature, was nevertheless miraculous! God arranged the timing of my son-in-law's homecoming to coincide with Maria's feast in order to teach us an important lesson about how much he loves us and wants us to turn to him in all things. While the "facts" of this miraculous event took our breath away—the "meaning" attached to it was even more profound.

Handout on Miracles

Old Testament Context of Miracles

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- ▶ Response should not be “thank you” as that terminates the contract. Services were no longer needed. The Samaritan returned to give thanks for being healed of leprosy (they figured that they would probably not encounter Jesus again), but the others went on to the Temple to give praise and thanks to God. They left their options open. They might need to return to Jesus for further healing.

What does our catechism tell us about miracles?

- ▶ (CCC, 155): Through faith our will and our intellect cooperate with God’s grace. When we believe in miracles, we give assent through our intellect and our will, thus cooperating with divine grace. We believe in the miracles of God by the grace of God, but it does require a response of faith on our part.
- ▶ God has given us human reason by which to come to faith in him.
- ▶ The miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, etc., are the most certain signs of God’s revealing presence to the world (CCC, 156).
- ▶ Miracles are “motives of credibility.” In other words, they give credibility to the faith we place in God and the signs that God works. In other words, they show us that our belief in them is not just some blind whim (CCC, 156).
- ▶ If we are more concerned with the wow factor of miracles without paying attention to what God is revealing to us, what God is teaching us, or how God wants us to grow in faith and intimacy with him, then we are missing the entire purpose of miracles in the first place. Jesus was very frustrated with the people who demanded signs over and over again. “Blessed are those who believe without seeing,” he insisted!
- ▶ The Catechism tells us Jesus’ miracles are a reminder—a sign—that he is fully divine. Jesus is God (CCC 515).
- ▶ Jesus’ miracles (albeit his entire life and mission) are intended to reveal God the Father to human beings (CCC, 515).
- ▶ Jesus’ words are accompanied by signs and wonders. Such signs and wonders reveal his kingdom to us and point us to the truth that he is the long awaited Messiah (CCC, 547).
- ▶ Jesus’ miracles invite us to believe in him. Miracles help strengthen faith in the One who not only does the work of the Father but who reveals him to us. Miracles witness to the undeniable truth that Jesus is God.
- ▶ Miracles are not for the purpose of satisfying curiosity or desire for magic (CCC, 548).
- ▶ Despite his obvious miracles, some people nevertheless reject him and choose not to believe. Some people accused him of operating under the authority of demons (CCC, 549).
- ▶ Why, then, if Jesus could perform miracles, is there suffering in the world? Could not God simply say the word and all suffering would end? The Catechism tells us that when Jesus freed some people from the earthly evils of hunger, injustice, illness, and death, he was performing messianic signs (miracles). However, he did not come to abolish all evils here, but rather he came to free people from the greatest slavery of all: sin.

- ▶ Why did Jesus manifest the Kingdom by means of signs and miracles? Jesus accompanied his words with signs and miracles to bear witness to the fact that the Kingdom, the reign of God, is present in him, the Messiah (#108: Compendium of the Catholic Catechism).
- ▶ Jesus promised that his disciples would do even greater works than he. That is why we can expect the signs and wonders to continue in our time.
- ▶ Not everyone responded to Jesus' miracles in a positive manner. Some were skeptical, spiritually immature, and legalistic. Such attitudes prevented them from seeing the amazing work of God through Jesus' miracles.

Implications

- ▶ We are challenged to move beyond our post-Enlightenment skepticism in relation to miracles and see the intervention of God in all human affairs.
- ▶ If we believe in God's omnipotence then how difficult is it to believe in his power over all created order?
- ▶ If we do not believe in miracles on some level, does that not reflect on our belief in God?
- ▶ Can we really say we believe in God if we deny that God can accomplish miracles out of love, care, and concern for the people he created?

Different Types of Miracles that Jesus performed

Nature Miracles

- ▶ The multiplication of the loaves is the only miracle story recorded by all four evangelists.
- ▶ Changing of water into wine
- ▶ First miraculous catch of fish
- ▶ Calming of the storm
- ▶ Multiplication of loaves
- ▶ Walking on water
- ▶ Second multiplication of loaves
- ▶ Coin in the fish's mouth
- ▶ Second miraculous catch of fish

Healings of Jesus

- ▶ Healing of the royal official's son
- ▶ Cleansing of the leper
- ▶ Cure of the mother-in-law of Peter
- ▶ Healing of paralytic
- ▶ Healing a sick man at Beth-zatha
- ▶ Restoring man with withered hand
- ▶ Healing the centurion's servant
- ▶ Healing of blind and mute person
- ▶ Healing of woman with hemorrhage
- ▶ Opening eyes of two blind men

- ▶ Cure of mute man
- ▶ Healing of deaf and mute man
- ▶ Opening the eyes of a blind person at Bethsaida
- ▶ Opening eyes of man born blind; restoring sick woman
- ▶ Healing the man with dropsy
- ▶ Cleansing lepers
- ▶ Opening eyes of blind man
- ▶ Healing Malchus' ear

Seven Deliverances of Jesus

- ▶ Demoniac at Capernaum
- ▶ Blind and mute demoniac
- ▶ Gadarene demoniacs
- ▶ Mute demoniac
- ▶ Daughter of Syro-Phonecian woman
- ▶ Child with demon
- ▶ Infirm woman

Victory over hostile antagonists

- ▶ Cleansing of Temple
- ▶ Escape from hostile crowd at Nazareth

Resuscitations

- ▶ Not resurrection like Jesus experienced; these people were restored to life but eventually were subject to natural death.
- ▶ The daughter of Jairus, Son of the widow of Nain, Lazarus

John's Gospel

- ▶ John's Gospel referred to extraordinary supernatural deeds of Jesus as signs.
- ▶ The first 11 chapters of the Gospel according to John are often referred to as the Book of Signs. The last ten are called the Book of Glory.
- ▶ John himself used the word sign instead of miracle. "A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick" (John 6:2).
- ▶ John recorded seven signs.
- ▶ For John, there is only one miracle: the death and resurrection of Jesus, the paschal mystery.
- ▶ John presents a theology of miracles in his last chapter. He insisted that there were other signs but that these were recorded in order to bring people to faith in Christ.
 - ✓ Changing water into wine at Cana
 - ✓ Cure of royal official's son
 - ✓ Cure on a Sabbath feast
 - ✓ Multiplication of loaves at Passover
 - ✓ Walking on the sea
 - ✓ Cure of man blind from birth
 - ✓ Raising of Lazarus